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The Crisis in the Revolutionary Movement

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BY

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An Address Delivered March 20, 1940

At the Labor Temple, New York



Published by

The Committee for the Preservation of the Jews

381 VAN SICLEN AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

S.F. . . .

The Crisis in the Revolutionary Movement.

1. Professor Draper said: No spectacle can be presented to the thoughtful mind more solemn, more mournful, than that of the dying of an ancient religion which, in its days, gave consolation to many generations of men. I know of a spectacle far more solemn and mournful, and that is the spectacle of the dying of an ancient ideal which gave hope to many generations of men. Such spectacle presents itself to us now - the spectacle of the dying of the ideal of communism. Communism is an ancient ideal. Whenever and wherever the oppressed and exploited masses rose against their oppressors and exploiters, communism was the ideal that they sought to realize. It was the communist ideal that inspired and sustained the killing masses during the Russian revolution; it was the communist ideal that brought out Soviet Russia; and it was the communist ideal that since then inspired the class-conscious revolutionary masses. The Russian revolution - what an achievement it was! What hope it inspired! We saw the dawn of a new day, the birth of a new world! But, alas, what bitter disappointment followed! The revolutionary spirit subsided, the revolutions in Germany and Hungary failed, and capitalism and imperialism asserted themselves again. But the most bitter disappointment was the downfall of our leaders. The Lenins and the Trotskys revealed themselves far shorter than they appeared when riding on the crest of the revolution. And the lesser revolutionary leader revealed themselves when coming down to earth, to be but ordinary individuals who, without any special merits of their own, were carried by the revolutionary stream into prominence. And as the years followed one another, we saw the downfall of our ideal. Communism was replaced by state capitalism, Marxism was replaced by Stalinism, the old revolutionary leaders were guillotined and disgraced; and all this culminating in the baptism and wedding of Stalin and Hitler. Now fallen are the mighty! And now we witness the disgusting spectacle of communists defending nazism and fascism! There is no longer a communist movement, and there is no longer a communist ideal. Men and women, who spent their creative years in the revolutionary movement, who worked, struggled and suffered for the realization of the communist ideal - these men and women lost faith in communism and confidence in one another, and they lost all hope. They were thrown out from the very revolutionary movement which they helped to build up, and by their own former comrades. Thus their whole past was destroyed, their world sank beneath them, leaving them hanging in an infinite void. In despair, they turned to the bourgeois world for help; and, to inspire the bourgeoisie with pity for them, these former revolutionary communists came out with confessions, confessing their sins and errors, and repenting their former ways. These revolutionary atheists who condemned religion as the opium of the people, now became religious themselves, and with the religious they now believe that confession is good for the soul. These revolutionary communists now discovered that they have souls. The Kamenevs, the Bucharins, the Zinovs, the Krivitskys, the Dubrowskys, the Lovestones, the Souvarines, the Gittlows and the Lyons - all of them confessed. Some confessed to terminate an unbearable existence; some confessed to save their nearest and dearest from torture and death; but most of them confessed to win favor with the bourgeoisie. What a spectacle!

2. Emerson says: Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principle. From this follows that nothing can deprive one of peace but the bankruptcy of principle. No greater tragedy can be conceived than at an advanced state in life to discover that the principle for which one worked, struggled and suffered during the creative years was an illusion. This is the tragedy that befall the communist revolutionaries, and this is the spectacle that presents itself to us now. And the most aggravating aspect of this spectacle is this: these confessing and repenting communists now entirely changed their standard of morality and judgment. Not only did they lose faith in communism and confidence in one another, but they now also repudiate everything which they regarded as sacred and noble. The revolutionary leaders, whom they deified and adored as gods and the noblest of men, these confessing and repenting communists now brand as sadistic criminals; and the great achievements of the revolutionary leaders, which these confessing and repenting com-

unists regarded as the greatest in history, they now condemn as dismal failures. Even the Russian revolution they regard as a colossal tragedy. These communists who championed the dictatorship of the proletariat and armed insurrection have now become champions of democracy and apostles of law and order. And even Marx and Marxism are not spared. These communists now turned their backs to Marx and repudiated Marxism. As if to revenge themselves for their failure to achieve a proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries and to become the Lenine and Trotskys, they now try to achieve a capitalist revolution among the proletarians, to teach the proletariat to abandon the class-struggle and the whole Marxian philosophy, and to unite with their capitalist brothers, and together work for the good of all. Not only this, but these communists also seek an alliance with the Catholic Church, with the Protestant Church, and even with the Jewish synagogue. These former revolutionaries have become respectable, and they are now struggling to get into respectable society. But, alas, these confessing and repenting communists will again be bitterly disappointed. These bankrupt and shipwrecked communists will not find the philosopher's stone by which they can efface their past, their former connections with the revolutionary movement will haunt them to the very grave.

3. Every revolutionary upheaval attracts a lot of fellow-travellers. These fellow-travellers are superficial and insincere, they always play safe. When the revolutionary forces are victorious, these fellow-travellers will profess to side with the revolutionaries. But, when a reaction sets in, these fellow-travellers are quick to disown their connection with the revolutionary forces, so as to save their cowardly skin. This was and is the case before us. The creative years of the Russian revolution caught in its stream a lot of liberals and fellow-travellers. Oh, how they gloried the revolution, its leaders and the proletariat! How staunchly they defended every thing done by the revolutionary leaders in Soviet Russia, and how they rejoiced in their identification with Soviet Russia! But, as the Bible says, the joy of the hypocrite is short. And now that the communist ideal is dying, the revolutionary movement is paralyzed, and the communist revolutionaries are confessing and repenting their former sins and errors, these liberals and fellow-travellers follow suit: they, too, come to the fore to confess and to repent. Confession is good for the soul. Let us hear the penitent confessions of a fellow-traveller. On January 21, 1940, at the Community Church, New York City, John Haynes Holmes delivered a sermon, entitled: Why we Liberals went Wrong on the Russian Revolution. In this sermon, among others, Pastor Holmes said the following:

I am to speak to you this morning on a subject suggested by the catastrophe of the Russian revolution - why we liberals went wrong in our attitude towards this stupendous historical event. What I say to you will be more or less autobiographical in character, for I must confess that this Russian experiment has been the supreme disillusionment of my life....

Why did we liberals go wrong. Because in our enthusiasm over Russia's liberation from the Tsar, in our excitement over the prospect of the further liberation of the Russian people from economic as well as political serfdom, in our vision of a new world springing from the womb of Russia's travail, we liberals permitted ourselves to condone wrongs that in our hearts we knew to be wrongs. We ignored injustices and cruelties that under any other circumstances we would have denounced. We consented to violations of principles that we knew to be fatal to the moral integrity of mankind. We defended, or at least apologized for, evils in the case of Russia and the Bolsheviks which horrified and outraged us wherever else they appeared and by whomever else they were done. Worst of all, many of us accepted tacitly, if not openly that most dangerous and ultimately disastrous idea that can lodge within the human mind - namely, that the end justifies the means. We tried to deny this, and really convinced ourselves that we had succeeded. But what we were doing was denying ourselves.....

At the very opening of the Bolshevik regime there occurred the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly..... Never was there a case of more arrant and brutal tyranny. Yet we liberals said nothing in condemnation of this specific out-

rage. We had flamed with fury when the Tsar interfered in the slightest degree with the Duma. But when Lenin now presumed to disperse the Assembly, we either kept silent, or else found apologies for the crime... Again, we liberals made few protests when the imprisonment of political offenders in Russia became a scandal and their treatment a horror.... Once again, we liberals remained silent when the kulaks were expropriated and Stalin began his movement for the enforced collectivization of the farms..... By the millions (these kulaks were gathered up, forced into cattle-cars, and conveyed under every circumstance of misery, disease and filth to the lost areas of the distant prisons of Russia, where they were dumped down like so much debris and left to struggle as best they could for survival... But we liberals said nothing, and some of us even undertook to justify a project more cruel than anything hitherto known in the history of revolutions. When at last there came the story of the planned famine in the Caucasus, which took the lives of between three to five million human beings, it seemed too much to believe. Stalin literally ringed a whole territory with troops, took out of this territory the abundant harvest, and then denied food to the population which was left to perish.....

The famine was followed by the purge. This was too much for me. The famous confessions seemed to me to be pure farce, where they were not stark tragedy. How many thousands of faithful communists, old Bolsheviks, loyal army officers, were shot to death before tireless firing squads! Here was a revolution devouring its own with a vengeance! By this time the whole liberal world should have been in an uproar. There should have been a raging tumult of disgust, denunciation, and horror from one end of the world to the other. But there was not! It remained for the Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler's Reich to strip away the last veils of self-deception from the eyes of the liberals, and to set them steadfastly against the cruel and bloody régime which they should have uncovered years before. Finland, of course, was the last straw. We now knew the worst and confessed it. But what shame for all of us, whatever the degree of our guilt, however early we had become suspicious, disturbed and at last hostile, that we had not seen the truth in the first instead of only in the last days! We are not through. Russia is forever spewed out of our mouths. Alas for the Russian people, betrayed, abused, massacred, and now driven like so many cattle into the latest and in some ways the worst imperialistic war of modern times!

So much from the sermon⁴ of Holmes.

4. This confession differs from the confessions of the communists: the confession of Holmes is honest and frank, while the confessions of the communists is neither honest nor frank. But the confession of Holmes has another aspect. Four months ago I spoke of Rauschnig's book: The Revolution of Nihilism; and Souvarine's book; Stalin. I then stated that these books, in themselves, are of no historic significance; but they are significant in this: they reveal the low moral level of mankind. Not only the Hitlers and the Stalins, but also the Rauschnigs and the Souvarines revealed themselves to be of a very low moral level. Both of them saw all the crimes, the horrors, and the inhumanities practiced both in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany; and yet, so long as it was safe for them to remain identified with the brutal, inhuman and sadistic régimes, so long they shut their eyes, and appeased their conscience with hopes that it would all change to the better. But only when their necks were caught in the noose, and they were about to pay with their life, only then they awoke to the discovery that those régimes were horrible. This is also true of the Holmes and the communists. So long as their person or their personal pet ideas and beliefs were not touched, they found good reasons for condoning all the infinite crimes and horrors perpetrated by the monsters that rule in these countries. But when these confessing penitents were caught in the noose, or their pet ideas or ideals were challenged, then they discovered that they worshipped monsters. What was it that determined Holmes to turn against Russia and to spew it out of his mouth forever? The Non-Aggression Pact between Stalin and Hitler, and the Russo-Finnish war. Suppose these two events did not occur, in that event Holmes, even though he might not approve what was being done in Soviet Russia, he would have remained silent against the infinite crimes and horrors committ-

ed in Soviet Russia, just as he was silent during all the horrible years since the Russian revolution. Here is a man, who calls himself a liberal, who for many years was preaching sermons in a Christian Church, in the name of Jesus, and who was universally regarded as a champion of morality, humanity and justice. Holmes was regarded as a superior type of man. And yet, this very Holmes saw it all, knew it all, and his moral nature was not aroused to the most violent reaction and condemnation against the greatest horrors known in history! What shall be said of the moral level of the rest of mankind? Is it any wonder that, almost ever night, the Russian and the German people were turned into beasts? The revelation of this beastly humanity is far more sickening than the horrors themselves. What hope is there for mankind? During all these agonizing years I was not tortured so much by what was going on in this beastly world as I was tortured and agonized by the low moral level of even the best of men. It was the reflection on this that made the years to me years of misery and agony. Not Hitler and Stalin are the monsters, but our priests and prophets are the real monsters. If the human race will be punished with a deluge of blood and suffering, it will be, not because of the Hitlers and the Stalins, but because of our priests and prophets; they are false and bereft of all morality. We are faced with a crisis, not only in the revolutionary movement, but a crisis in humanity. The crisis presents itself in two aspects; a human aspect, and a historic aspect. I will consider these aspects in the order stated.

5. The Human Aspect. Spencer, in his study of Sociology, tells us the following: A Nepal King, Rana Bahadur, whose beautiful queen, finding that her lovely face had been disfigured by small-pox, poisoned herself; cursed his kingdom, her doctors, and the gods of Nepal, vowing vengeance on all. Having ordered the doctors to be flogged, and the right ear and nose of each to be cut off, he then wreaked his vengeance on the gods of Nepal; and, after abusing them in the most gross way, he accused them of having obtained from him twelve thousand goats, some hundred-weights of sweetmeats, two thousand gallons of milk, etc., under false pretences. He then ordered all the artillery, varying from three to twelve-pounders, to be brought in front of the palace. All the guns were then loaded to the muzzle and down he marched to the head-quarters of the Nepal deities. All the guns were drawn up in front of the several deities, honoring the most sacred with the heaviest metal. When the order to fire was given, many of the chiefs and soldiers ran away panic-stricken, and others hesitated to obey the sacrilegious order; and not until several gunners had been cut down, were the guns opened. Down came the gods and goddesses from their hitherto sacred positions; and after six hours of heavy cannonading not a vestige of the deities remained.

6. Spencer cites this case, which happened in the middle of the nineteenth century, to illustrate the truth that a superstitious person remains superstitious even when he becomes disillusioned in the object of his superstition. This king was superstitious; he believed that the idols made of stone and adorned with silver and gold were veritable gods. Temples were built and maintained in their honor; a vast priesthood was supported in idleness and luxury, whose business it was to prevail upon these deities to bestir themselves on behalf of the king and his interests. When the queen became sick, the king bestowed gifts upon the gods and the priests, in the belief that they could save his queen from disfigurement. But nothing helped; the poor queen came out disfigured. The king was terribly disappointed in his gods. And now he determined to destroy the gods, thus punishing them for failing to help him. In his superstition, the king sought to revenge himself upon the gods; and, while apparently he freed himself from his former superstition, he still remained superstitious; first, because he believed that those stone idols could be punished, as if they were conscious and could feel pain; secondly, because the king did not for a moment realize that those poor innocent idols were only the external manifestation of his own superstition, and that the guns should have been directed against him, and not against the innocent idols. This is the case before us. The penitent communists and their fellow-travellers were superstitious when they worshipped the monsters that ruled in Russia, and

they remained superstitious in that, like that superstitious king, they put the blame upon the Stalins, instead of putting the blame upon themselves. Could the Stalins perpetrate the crimes and horrors, if the communists and their fellow-travellers were not morally so blind, deaf and dumb? Can these penitent communists and their penitent fellow-travellers raise their hands and say: we have not shed the innocent blood? No, their hands are red with the blood of the millions that were horribly destroyed! No, I can find some excuse for the Stalins, but I can find no excuse for these morally low individuals who condoned all these crimes and horrors. At least in countries outside of Russia men were free to express their moral indignation, without running the risk of losing their life or freedom; and yet, so low was the moral level of even the outstanding leaders that not one raised a word of protest. Yes, there were protests from the enemies of Soviet Russia, but not from the friends of Soviet Russia. Why were they silent? An infinite number of reasons will not clear them before the judgment of history and posterity. And their present outpouring of confessions adds insult to injury. Having in the first instance participated in all the crimes and horrors that killed out tens of millions of innocent Russians, they now seek salvation of their souls by confessions. And in these confessions there is a sinister motive. Now that Stalin made a pact with Hitler; now that Stalin revealed himself to be a bird of a feather with Hitler, the communists and their fellow-travellers find it is good, not only for the soul, but also for the body to turn against their former god; the Jews and the others that suffered from Hitlerism will forgive the communists their past sins, and let them come into the midst of the Jews. Again, the Russo-Finnish war is a good pretext for the fellow-travellers to sever relations with their former idols. It was the last straw, as Holmes says; but it was not the last straw that broke the back of the camel; it was the last straw that saved these fellow-travellers: their eyes opened! If the Russo-Finnish war accomplished this much, that it opened the eyes of these superstitious fools, it already served a very useful purpose. Poor Finns, they had to expiate for the sins and crimes of the leaders of religion, morality and communism? But there must be scapegoats. The Jews are not an exception.

7. The superstitious communists and their fellow-travellers, like the superstitious king of Nepal, now turned against their former gods, and now direct their guns against the Stalins. But the superstitious king of Nepal was at least able to punish the gods: the communists and their fellow-travellers have not even this satisfaction. What can they do about the Stalins and the Hitlers? The time when they could do something to prevent the Stalins and the Hitlers from establishing hell on earth passed: the Stalins and the Hitlers are now entrenched in power, and they will remain in power until they destroy present society with its high priests. The superstition of the communists and their fellow-travellers was but a manifestation of a deeper and more fundamental superstition - a superstition born out of a total ignorance of history. They started out with the belief that men can make history as they please. Having discovered this deep truth, they strained all their mental faculties to plan, scheme and to plot, in the conviction that they will succeed to outmaneuver all opposition, attain to supremacy and power, and realize their aim. Have the communists ever learned anything from history? Where are now the Lenins, the Trotskys, the Bucharins and the Zinoveyevs? And where will the Stalins be? This is the penalty that they paid for the superstitious belief that men can make history as they please. This superstition was complemented by another superstition, namely, that man is only a reflex of the material conditions of existence. Until now men were corrupt, because the material conditions of existence were beastly. But let only a state of socialism be established, and men will overnight become rational and pro-social. What a superstition! And how dearly the Russian people and the revolutionary leaders paid for this superstition! And the worst superstition was this: the communists combined both superstitions, though on their face it is apparent that they are mutually destructive of each other. If men are only a reflex of the material conditions of existence; if the material conditions of existence determine the nature of men and the course of history; how can men, of their own accord, rise above the material

conditions of existence and make history as they please? The truth is that both assumptions are false: the nature of man is not determined by the material conditions of existence, and men cannot make history as they please. What the truth is about the relation of men to the material conditions of existence and history, we shall see in the next lecture. But the communists starting out with these false assumptions, were doomed to bitter disappointments. Starting out with the assumption, that men make their own history, the communists strained all their mental faculties to devise plans and schemes to direct the course of history as they pleased. And it was natural that some of the leaders should, for the moment, appear wiser and shrewder than the rest; and it was also natural that these leaders should be regarded as supermen. Starting out with Lenin as the superman, it was natural that the idea of superman should culminate in Stalin, as not only a superman, but a veritable god. Was there ever a time in past history when men deified a man as the communists deified Stalin? Was there a time when men submitted so slavishly to the arbitrary will of any god as the communists submitted to the arbitrary will of god Stalin? Could this superstitious idolatry go unpunished? Again, starting with the other false assumption, that men are only the reflex of the material conditions, it was natural for the communists to believe that, once the old regime is destroyed and the capitalists removed; once, by decree, socialism is declared to be the established order; and the Russian people would at once become socialists, and socialism would indeed be realized. Well, Stalin assured the world that in Soviet Russia they already realized socialism, and now they are realizing communism. And the same assurance is made by Hitler, that in Nazi Germany they already established socialism. But both do not mention the concentration camps, the prisons, the blood-purges, the absolute tyranny and despotism, and the abolition of all human rights and freedoms. Yes, indeed, there is socialism in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, socialism with a vengeance; it is the socialism of the concentration camps, the prisons and the grave. This is the crisis in the revolutionary movement, and this is the crisis that faces us.

8. The Historic Aspect. At the outset, I quoted the statement by Professor Draper, namely: No spectacle can be presented to the thoughtful mind more solemn, more mournful, than that of the dying of an ancient religion which, in its days, gave consolation to many generations of men. I added: I know of a spectacle that is even more solemn and mournful, and that is the spectacle of the dying of an ancient ideal which, in its days, gave hope to many generations of men. And now the question is: Are these statements true? We shall presently see that, from the human aspect, these statements are true; but from the historic aspect these statements are false. Suppose that an ancient religion, which gave consolation to many generations, dies; or suppose an ideal, which gave hope to many generations, dies; in either case, this is a solemn and mournful spectacle only to those who are bound up with the old religion or the old ideal, who cannot take up a new religion or a new ideal, and therefore must die together with the old religion and the old ideal. But this is not a solemn and mournful spectacle to those who can take up the new religion or the new ideal. On the contrary, to them the dying of an ancient religion or an ancient ideal, which can no longer function and outlived its usefulness, is rather a rejoicing spectacle. The consideration of two historic cases will make it clear. When Christianity came into existence, the ancient pagan religions were dying. To the pagans who were bound up with the ancient religions, and who could not adopt Christianity, the dying of the ancient religions was a solemn and mournful spectacle; but to those that adopted Christianity, the dying of the ancient pagan religions was a rejoicing spectacle. With what joy the converts of Christianity received the glad gospel of the new religion! Again, the dying of private capitalism is a solemn and mournful spectacle to the capitalists, who are bound up with private capitalism, and who cannot identify themselves with the new economic order that takes the place of private capitalism. But the dying of private capitalism is not a solemn and mournful spectacle to the communists. On the contrary, to them it is a rejoicing spectacle. Thus we see that the above statements are true only from the human aspect, from the aspect of those who cannot identify themselves with the inevitable course of history; but these

statements are false from the historic aspect. History brings our religions and ideals for a definite time only; and, when the time passes, the religions and the ideals are retired; that new religions and new ideals may be brought out by history. Thus history makes progress. If history remained bound up with ancient forms it would cease to be history, and this would mean the death of mankind.

9. What is history? History is the process of human existence. The process of human existence, like all other processes in existence, is the realization in the material world of an idea. The idea which realizes itself as history is an idea of God. At this occasion I shall not stop to elaborate on this; I have adequately elaborated this subject in my philosophy of history, which is embodied in my other works. Now, the realization of an idea goes through a succession of stages, each stage of which assumes a definite form. In other words, the realization of an idea is through successive forms. The realization of an idea involves two processes: a positive and a negative process. The positive process brings out a form of realization of the idea. The idea functions through this form for a time. Then comes the time for the negation of this form, that a higher form may be realized. And so the idea goes through a succession of forms, bringing out forms that function for a time, and then are negated that higher forms may be brought out. This continues until the idea realizes its destiny. Let us consider the cases of religions and ideals. Whatever other characteristics a religion has, essentially religion is an anticipation of the destiny of mankind. The destiny may be conceived to be realized in heaven or on this earth. This is of secondary importance. It is clear that primitive man could not conceive a form of religion of the same nature that civilized men conceived. Yet, no matter how crude and primitive a form of religion was, it served a useful purpose. It trained men to think of the future and to concern themselves about an existence that transcended their actual existence. But, while all ancient religions served a useful purpose, if they continued to this day, there would have been no progress. It was therefore necessary that, once the ancient religions served their purpose, that they be retired, so that new and higher religions might be brought out. Hence the dying of ancient religions was rather a rejoicing spectacle. And the same is true of ideals. Whatever be the specific nature or form of an ideal, essentially an ideal is an anticipation of a better and higher state of existence. But mankind could conceive only such ideals as the material conditions and their own development permitted them. It is clear that primitive man could not conceive such ideals of existence as we can conceive. But, however crude and primitive an ideal was, it served a useful purpose; it inspired mankind with the determination to strive, work, struggle, suffer and even to die for the realization of a higher and better state of existence. But, no matter how useful an ideal was, if it was continued to this day, mankind would make no progress, and they would perish. Hence, it was necessary that, once an ideal served its purpose, it should be retired, so that mankind should be free to take up higher ideals. Hence, the dying of ancient ideals was not a solemn and mournful spectacle. On the contrary, it was a rejoicing spectacle.

10. Now, all this may seem to be mere commonplaces, and it will be so regarded. Yet we shall presently see that, though these are mere commonplaces, and should be universally known and understood, there were and are few individuals that understood these commonplaces, and still fewer that accepted these commonplaces as a guide in life. Leaving out of consideration the religious world, in which countless millions of human beings struggled and still struggle to preserve ancient forms of religion, and confining ourselves to the consideration of the world of revolutionary ideals, we shall be surprised to find that even revolutionaries never understood these commonplaces, and certainly did not make these commonplaces their guiding principle in life. The Trotskyites still speak the language of 1917-1921. They still insist that the Soviet Russia of today is just what it was in those years, when Lenin still lived, and when Trotsky was still one of the outstanding leaders. The Trotskyites maintain that, once the Stalinists are removed, Soviet Russia will emerge in all its pristine purity. How naive! The Tzarists also imagine that, once the communists are removed from power, Russia will emerge in

all its Tsarist purity. Now, while we can forgive the Tsarists, because they never understood history; but what excuse is therefor Marxists to entertain such superstitious ideas? No matter what may come to pass; the Stalinites may be destroyed, and the Trotskyites may be restored to power; still more, Trotsky himself may take the place of Stalin - Soviet Russia will never again be what it was in the years 1917-1921. Here we see how even the Trotskyites never understood the commonplaces of which I spoke above. And what about the Stalinites; are they any better? The Stalinites insist that their present Soviet Russia is just the Soviet Russia which Lenin established; that they are true Leninites and Marxists; and that they have not in the least deviated from the ideas of Lenin and Marx. And the communists in Soviet Russia accept this superstition! What blindness and what superstition! And what about the communists that became bitterly disappointed, and now turn their back to Soviet Russia and Marxism, are they any wiser? Why are they bitterly disappointed? Because the revolutionary situation of 1917-1921 passed. In those years the working masses in the civilized countries were imbued with the spirit of the Russian revolution. Everywhere the working masses were stirring and rising. It was a time when ambitious communists had the opportunity to become leaders. Some, indeed, groomed themselves to become the Lenins and the Trotskys in the other countries. But those years passed, and together with them also passed the revolutionary situation. The masses settled down, and there is no longer the opportunity for ambitious communists to become leaders. Hence, the bitter disappointment. It is absolutely certain, that if the revolutionary situation continued, those communists would not be disappointed, they would stick to Soviet Russia with all their might, and they would swear by Marx, Lenin and Stalin, and everything would be all right. But, alas, the revolutionary situation passed and, together with it, also passed the prospect of becoming leaders. These communists never could stand on their own feet; they always needed the support of the masses. But now that the masses no longer support these men of clay, they fell to the ground. What a katzenjammer these heroes raised! What a farce! Were these men of clay revolutionaries?

11. And so we see that what I stated may be a mere commonplace, which should have been known universally, yet even revolutionaries never understood and accepted this commonplace. The revolutionary situation of 1917-1921 had to pass, to make room for constructive work; and together with that revolutionary situation also had to pass the ideals and ideas of those years. A true revolutionary would have expected this even in the years 1917-1921; and, certainly, a true revolutionary must accept the changes that have taken place since then, and this presupposes an understanding of what took place, and what must follow. I stated before that communism was the ideal of the oppressed and exploited masses all through the past, but their ideal was a communism of consumption: they could not think of a communism of production, for the material conditions were not yet prepared for communism of production. Now, communism of consumption is a crude and primitive ideal of communism; it excludes cooperation on a large scale. Communism of consumption cannot and will not solve the social problems. Only communism of production can and will solve the social problems. Communism of production is universal by its nature, it comprehends the whole human race and covers the whole earth. But that communism of production may be conceived, the material conditions and the working class must first be prepared by history. The great historic achievement of Marx was just this: he retired the ideal of communism of consumption, and in its place established the ideal of communism of production. This was a great historic achievement. At last, the working class were shown what their goal was. Here, again, the retirement of the old ideal of communism was a solemn and mournful spectacle to the revolutionaries of the old school. Communism of consumption is compatible with Christianity, with anarchism, with Prudhonianism, with Blanquism, and all other isms. But communism of production means organization, and organization means discipline, and discipline means the subordination of the will of the individual to the will of the organization, the will of the people, the will of the nation, and the will of the whole human race. Hence, the revolutionaries of the old school rose in arms against Marx and the Marxists. But as the course of history is toward communism of production, Marxism was bound to overcome and retire the old revolutionary ideals that were

bound up with communism of consumption. And the Russian revolution forever sealed the fate of the old type of idealists. Hence, the dying of the old communist ideal was a solemn and mournful spectacle to the upholders of the ideal of communism of consumption, but it was a rejoicing spectacle to the revolutionaries that identified themselves with the ideal of communism of production. Now, these disappointed communists entirely mistook themselves and Marxism. First, they did not understand that they belonged to the old school of revolutionaries, and therefore were doomed to bitter disappointments. Secondly, they did not understand Marxism. They did not understand the greatness of Marxism, and they did not understand its inadequacies. Their ideology was of a purely human, and not of a historic nature; they had no idea of history. They were drawn into the revolutionary stream, without knowing what they were and what function they were performing. History is not made by men, it is history that makes men. But that history may achieve creative work, it chooses such men as, more or less, understand history. To the extent that one understands history and identifies himself with it, to that extent history uses him. When, however, one has reached the limit of his understanding history, history discards him. Men, like Moses, the Prophets and Jesus, understood history throughout, and therefore they functioned already for thousands of years, and they will continue to function through all future. But these were exceptional men. Ordinary men, may they be even Alexanders, Caesars, Napoleons, Stalins and Hitlers - they function for a while, and then disappear together with their apparent achievements. The crisis that faces us is not a crisis in the revolutionary movement, it is a crisis of the revolutionary communists who have no further function to perform. The revolutionary movement will continue until it realizes the ideal of communism. There is infinite revolutionary work before us, but for this purpose history requires a new generation of revolutionaries. Let the old revolutionaries rest in peace, they deserved it; but the new revolutionaries must arm themselves with determination to continue the struggle.

12. We stand at the beginning of a new revolutionary period. Whatever be the nature of the problem that confronts us, it must first be solved in thought, and the solution is an idea how to solve the problem. And whatever be the task that faces us, it must first be performed in thought, and the result is an idea how to perform the task. In undertaking the task that faces us and to solve the problems involved in this task, we must first crystallize a true idea for the performance of the task and the solution of the problems. This, in the first instance, requires a re-examination of Marxism. Marxism is one of the greatest achievements of history, but it suffers from fundamental inadequacies. We must understand these inadequacies, and why history required these inadequacies. We shall then see that history no longer requires these inadequacies, and we must remove them. This will be the subject for the next lecture.